



Calvary MESSENGER

“ . . . God forbid that I should glory, save in
the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ”

Galatians 6:14

AUGUST 2017

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Calvary Messenger

August 2017

Purpose of Calvary Messenger is:

- To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
- To stimulate a deeper study of God’s Word;
- To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;
- To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Savior;
- To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
- And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

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Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the **Editor**. Other Material—mail to their respective **Editors**.

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**.

When you move, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$8.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$24.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$7.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$4.25 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$4.25. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 7498 Woods West Ave., London, OH 43140.

Life is Not Fair

Elaine Hochstetler, Aroda, VA

Hunger, hunger, brings many eyes to tears;
Wasteful, wasteful, it's ringing in my ears.

Thirsty, thirsty, the water is so brown;
Gulping, gulping, I dump some on the ground.

Toiling, toiling, o'er fires small and hot;
Cooking, cooking, with gadgets and whatnot.

Itchy, itchy, the people scratch for lice;
Screeching, screeching, a house no place for mice.


Bathing, bathing, to rivers swift they lope;
Showering, showering, hot water? Yes, and soap!

Tossing, turning, it's hard for they're unfed;
Dreaming, dreaming, I lie in my soft bed.

Learning, learning, on dirt floors with the mice;
Studying, studying, in schools so clean and nice.

Slowly, slowly, they walk through mud like tar;
Swiftly, swiftly, I travel near and far.

Dying, dying, with cures too far away;
Swallowing, swallowing, for headaches every day.

Chanting, dancing, no hope when life will end;
Singing, praying, I worship my dear Friend. 

Rising Above Sinful Anger

This morning a neighbor came by for farm-fresh eggs. He brought along his very young child—so sweet and innocent! In explaining why she came along, he said that if he leaves home without her (not yet two), she “throws a hissy fit.” An old proverb fits her: “The smaller the pot, the quicker it’s hot!”

How did this child learn to get so impatiently angry? Did the parents tell her that that’s how she can have her way? Surely not! Being wise parents, we hope they will diligently do what they can to develop wiser responses to disappointment. It’s not good for anyone always to get his or her own way.

But is not anger a God-given emotion? Did not He who made us give us anger as a valid emotion? I think so. That gift, however, became tainted in the fall. Cain’s murderous anger can hardly be called the gift God gave. We can lash out and vent our displeasure destructively. Such anger may start as disappointment objecting to perceived injustice but accelerate into destructive anger.

Sinful anger is self-justifying. We all know how impatience rises when

we must wait and when we want to have our own way—now! When we can’t have it, to throw a “hissy fit” (a term not found in my dictionary) comes naturally.

It is not wise, however, to decide that it is better not to feel keenly about things. No, simply being passive is not God’s way. Trusting the Lord when we’re disappointed and recognizing His hand in life’s disappointments provides the key to handling our disappointments. Christians don’t need to express hateful anger. God gives grace to bear disappointment without destructive reaction.

What Experience Teaches

The good news: It is possible to get angry without sinning. Negative feelings don’t have to be vented immediately. “The discretion of a man deferreth [delays] his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression” (Proverbs 19:11).

Shameful incidents in my past life came by handling anger poorly. Sometimes instead of taking a disappointment to the Lord, I would say something inaccurate and insulting, and it left a “mess” that I

needed to face and “clean up.” Peace of mind and heart returned only after I faced and repented of my poor reaction.

An anonymous poet expressed it this way:

*When I have lost my temper
I have lost my reason too.
I'm never proud of anything
Which angrily I do.*

*When I have talked in anger,
And my cheeks were flaming red,
I have always uttered something
Which I wish I had not said.*

*In anger I have never
Done a kindly deed or wise,
But many things for which I felt
I should apologize.*

Decades ago, a gentle old man had the misfortune of accidentally stepping on a woman's toe. He profusely apologized, but got this response, “It's alright—but it still hurts!” I doubt that she gave him a calm and steady look. When eye contact vanishes, disappointment is still unresolved.

We all face disappointment. That's when it is easy to get angry. We may not realize that we are angry, especially at first. If we deny such feelings, however, we may stuff them down inside where they churn and churn. That's not what clear conscience and

strong relationships are made of. Stuffing produces denial and a host of other ills. Denial can also leave people guessing what we're up to.

How to Handle Anger

- First, let's not think that honesty requires expressing every negative emotion. “Be ye angry and sin not” (Eph. 4:26a).

- Secondly, let's take time to think calmly and caringly before we speak. Remember, “he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

- Thirdly, remember that the goal is not passivity or denial. At least to yourself, acknowledge your anger. People of principle feel deeply about what is right and what is wrong. The goal must be commitment to following Jesus and living by Kingdom values.

- Fourthly, make amends when necessary. One father realized that his angry, unloving first response toward his adolescent son was wrong. He soon called him aside and apologized. On the day of that father's funeral, the son who devoutly follows the Savior, testified that his father's humble admission years before deeply touched him and goes with him in his parental role ever since.

Destructive Anger

Long ago, a father found his young son playing at the neighbor's place without permission. When this father arrived at the neighbor's house he proceeded to angrily scold his son in the presence of the neighbor's children. Then he marched him out the driveway and toward home and as he walked behind the screaming child, he actually kicked him several times. Who can tell how much damage was done by that outrageous behavior? Abuse takes a number of different forms—and they're all destructive. Is it surprising that that son struggled to make a good contribution in life when he grew up, even though he was devoted to Christ?

Billy Sunday once said, "You say that you have a bad temper, but that it's

over in a minute? So's a shotgun blast, but it blows everything to pieces."

Thank God that when Jesus reigns within, He helps us process our anger in a godly way. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour [noisy insistence] and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice [desire for others to suffer]: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4: 31,32). Praise the Lord that when He sits on the throne of our heart, He enables us to rise above what comes quite naturally! Hallelujah, His power is far better than what "simply biting the tongue" does for those who restrain their angry feelings by rigid self-control!

-PLM



the bottom line

The Paperless Society

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

The dream of a paperless society seems to still be producing a lot of paper. Standard furnishings for a well equipped office now include a paper shredder. We see large van body trucks on the road who have on them the lettering to indicate that they are employed in a paper shredding business. The controversial

Affordable Care Act by the United States government was written on 2000 pages of paper. To modify the ACA, some persons now in our nation's capital will likewise use reams of paper by the time all those concerned get their own copy with rewriting it. Some of the proponents of these policies and other matters of questionable support, are pushing

campaigns to “save our trees.” Trees are needed to make paper.

The Bible says, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (I Timothy 6:7).

We enter this world crying, then we fill our hands with stuff, and die disappointed. Thus the pessimist’s hands of exasperation are filled with the strength of vanity and emptied in a reluctant release of human weakness into the bin of worthlessness.

We might say the humanist’s house is “built with paper.” The foundation is the birth certificate. The sidewalls are erected with papers that contain end-of-life wills and numerous trusts and contracts. The roof is covered with thirteen credit cards and six debit cards, and layered with the statements of their many transactions. The main floor is covered with \$100 bills. The basement is covered with \$10 bills, and the upstairs is laid out in \$20 bills. The partitions are set with canceled checks from the bank’s checking account, and the interior side walls are covered with the same, for they are many. There are no windows, and indeed it would be a dark and dreary and dead house except for its unique lighting system. Every room has a stunning chandelier which is lit by the vanity of the humanist’s accomplishments. They shine ever

so brightly when he brings out the plaques of honor bestowed upon him, and the certificates of community achievements given by the praise of the same stock of men. His friends all have houses like these, where they can party by turn with much glee. “And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19).

But alas, finally the sun goes down. The voice from on high says, “Return ye foolish children of foolish men.”

The partitions fall inward. Every floor collapses and covers the basement in a deathly implosion. The roof falls down, covering all else. The dust has in it the smell of death. The contracts on the outside wall fall inward, and immediately upon this heap of only worthless papers fall the walls of the trusts and finally the last will and testament of the deceased.

“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. There is no remembrance of former things that are to come with those (people) that shall come after” (Ecclesiastes 1:1-5,11).

The dust settles. It is dark. His picture is in the newspaper. His obituary will praise him once more to the heights of the clouds. The layout for his final viewing is very impressive indeed, for no one ever saw so many lovely flowers. But now his body lies in the opulent casket. Everyone says he looks so natural. And indeed he does, for he has been dead for most of his life. But not to worry, for the preacher praises him once more to high heaven. And what happened to the pile of mere paper that was the humanist's house? Why, the Holy Lord God descended to look upon it. The angel touched it with a bit of God's holy fire. It immediately ignited, not in fire, for it was not worthy to burn by earth's element. It quickly evaporated, for the Bible says the humanist's life is like a "vapor, that appears for a little time, then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

Now hear the summons from high heaven. It is loud and clear as it sounds across the expansive plains and over every mountain and valley, even into the cracks and crevices and on through to all the caves and man-made tunnels. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

(Matthew 16:26). "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20).

The waste paper basket of vanity for the humanist has turned into a waste paper casket of disgrace and shame. In it was the passport to travel all over the world, but nothing to present with any validity to enter heaven.

Those who fear God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ keep on building on the solid rock, Christ Jesus the Lord. Their devotion to God sets up sturdy side walls. Their various deeds for the Kingdom of Christ comprise substantial partitions. The roof over all else is the ready obedience to the Bible's commands. The windows let in the clear light of surrender and humility to Christ.

This house will stand the test of time. The next generation will have learned how to build their house. It is a testimony to the world. Others also may follow the pattern and be preserved into the everlasting kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

The Bottom Line is that the papers of earth of which we concern ourselves so much, have no eternal benefit unless they in some way help to advance the Kingdom of Christ.



The Bible and Inclusion

Eric Brubaker, Ephrata, PA

Our culture has a fascination these days with the concept of inclusion. In fact, it almost seems as though there is a cultural *agenda of inclusion*. Political policy makers and national leaders have gone out of their way to appear inclusive of all ideas, lifestyles, viewpoints and behavior. And the push for inclusion has manifested itself in a celebration of diversity and open-mindedness in all areas of life. But people seem to be enamored with the *idea* of inclusion, not necessarily the *practice* of it. Many college campuses today are heralded as hotbeds of inclusion and diversity. But as some have pointed out, many universities today are in fact the greatest places of exclusion and narrow-mindedness (Arthur C. Brooks, *Academia's Rejection of Diversity*, New York Times Op-Ed, October 31, 2015, p.A23). College campuses have been advertised as "safe spaces," but in fact some observe that they have become places of the greatest bullying and display of "microaggression" (Roger Kimball, *The Rise of the College Crybullies*, Wall Street Journal, November 14-15, 2015, p.A9).

In its basic understanding, inclusion really is a good thing. No

school-age child relishes the thought of feeling left out of the playground kickball game. No junior high student welcomes the thought of being excluded from the "in" crowd. No adult appreciates being unnoticed or forgotten in social circles. Webster says that to *include* means, "to take in or comprise as part of a larger aggregate or principle." Synonyms are, embrace and involve. And so, inclusion is when we take people into our group who once were on the outside looking in. Perhaps they were on the fringes. But when we include them, it means that we embrace and involve them.

The Church Landscape - The current-day cultural *agenda of inclusion* has also found its way into the church. At our most recent Church of the Brethren Annual Conference (2016), there were at least two insight sessions on the topic of inclusion, both sponsored by the church agency, *On Earth Peace*. There are congregations across the denomination who have officially labeled themselves as "open and affirming," meaning that they have adopted an official position of *inclusion*. And in our church publications we have had articles that promote inclusion ("A Funny

Thing Happened on the Road to Gaza...The Circle Got Bigger,” Bob Neff. *Messenger*. October 2012 / “Revelation at the Paradise Diner: An Easter Reflection,” Earl Fike, Jr. *Messenger*. March 2013).

What Does Inclusion Mean? – When many congregations today label themselves as inclusive, it often means that they are extending full acceptance of “LGBTQ believers” (Irvin Heishman, *A Biblical Basis for Inclusion: A Pastor’s Journey*, On Earth Peace Assembly, 2016, p.11) into the life of the church. It is said that this is an attempt to, “include all who choose to follow Jesus.” But at its core, the urge to be inclusive is often driven by an attempt to sympathize with, embrace and involve those whom they believe society and the church has excluded and marginalized. Therefore, today’s understanding of inclusion is not only about sexual orientation, but also about race, gender, ethnicity, in fact, any form of identity. This led the Church of the Brethren Agency, *On Earth Peace*, to issue the following, “Statement of Inclusion,” in the fall of 2011:

“We are troubled by attitudes and actions in the church, which exclude persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other aspect of human identity. We believe God calls the church to welcome all persons into full participation in the life of the faith community.”

Today’s understanding of inclusion often involves the removal of social norms and traditions in deference to personal self-expression. And in the church, the rationalization for inclusion often comes by adjusting long-held understandings of the Bible. Someone has observed that one of the widely held beliefs that shapes our culture is that, “The primary social ethic is tolerance of everyone’s self-defined quest for individual freedom and self-expression. Any deviation from this ethic of tolerance is dangerous and must not be tolerated. Therefore social justice is less about economic or class inequality, and more about issues of equality relating to individual identity, self-expression, and personal autonomy” (Sayers, Mark. *Disappearing Church*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. 2016, p.17).

Does the Bible Teach Inclusion? – If we take a faithful look at the Scriptures, I think we can conclude that the Bible does teach inclusion, but not as it is being promoted today.

Eternal Inclusion? – For sure, the Bible teaches that God does not want anyone to perish eternally and be excluded from the life and presence of God. Rather, it says that He is, “patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9/ESV). God wants everyone, “to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4/NKJV). God wants everyone to be eternally

included in His kingdom. But these verses also indicate that not everyone will be included in the kingdom of God, and the path to salvation and inclusion is marked by repentance.

Inclusion in the Old Testament - In the Old Testament the children of Israel were commanded to treat aliens and strangers who were living among them as though they were native-born, and to love them as themselves (Leviticus 19:34). Aliens and strangers were to worship in exactly the same way as those native-born in the presentation of their offerings (Numbers 15:14). Aliens, along with the fatherless, the poor and the needy, were not to be mistreated or denied justice (Deuteronomy 24:17; Ezekiel 22:29). The book of Deuteronomy also teaches that the children of Israel were not supposed to abhor the Edomite or the Egyptian. In fact, the third generation of children born to them was allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord, thus showing that foreigners were permitted full inclusion and acceptance into the worshipping community in the third generation (Deuteronomy 23:7-8).

It should be noted that an “alien” was a proselyte, a convert to Judaism, a non-Israelite. Aliens enjoyed certain *conceded*, but not *inherited* rights. An alien was to have the same obligations and privileges as the native-born Israelite. If a foreigner or a slave wanted to participate in the Passover, they were required to comply with

the prescribed regulations, just as a native-born person. Neither a temporary resident nor a hired worker was permitted to eat the Passover (Exodus 12:45). A slave who was bought or an alien living among them could eat the Passover, but only after being circumcised. Numbers 15:15-16 says, “The community is to have the same rules for you and for the alien living among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the alien shall be the same before the Lord: The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the alien living among you.” (NIV)

Inclusion in the New Testament - In the New Testament Jesus broke social norms when He talked with the Samaritan woman in John 4. He was known as a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19), and was not afraid to be in the company of an unclean leper, a social outcast (Luke 5:12-14). In the parable of *The Good Samaritan*, Jesus taught that we should be willing to help those who are in need, even though they may be outside the perceived boundaries of social norms (Luke 10). But it should be noted that befriending outcasts and helping those in need is not to be equated with inclusion into the faith community. Acts of kindness and hospitality do not imply conversion, though by God’s grace they may lead to it.

Acts 10-11: The book of Acts

records the beginning and expansion of the early church under the ministries of Peter and Paul. Both Peter and Paul were Jews, but they came to realize that the gospel was for Jew and Gentile alike. In Acts 10:28, Peter said that it was against the law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile, or even to visit him. But because of a vision that he saw, he realized that he was not to call anything impure that God had made clean (Acts 10:15). As a result, he went to Cornelius' house (who was a Gentile) and said, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10:34-35/ESV). Peter realized that God would accept (include) both Jew and Gentile alike, if they feared Him and did what was right. The implication of course is that if a Jew or Gentile did *not* fear Him and did *not* do what is right, they would *not* be accepted.

When Peter went back to Jerusalem to explain to the Jewish believers that the Gentiles had also received the gift of the Holy Spirit, he said, "If then God gave the same gift to them as He gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:17-18/ESV). The early

church realized that the evidence of conversion was the gift of the Holy Spirit, for Jew and Gentile alike. And the path that leads to life is marked by repentance which is granted by God. For the early church then, inclusion into the faith community was based on a person's desire to be included, evidence of the Holy Spirit, and repentance.

Acts 15: In Acts chapter 15, the early church was again tested about who could be included in the faith community. In particular, did a male need to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1)? The apostles and elders met to consider this question and concluded that Gentile males did not need to be circumcised to be saved. The fact that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit (without being circumcised), was evidence of their acceptance by God (Acts 15:8). However, the Gentiles were asked to, "abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well" (Act 15:29/ESV). The Gentiles did not have to be circumcised to be saved, but they were still asked to abide by certain ceremonial and moral teachings.

It is clear that the Bible teaches that *anyone* can be included in the faith community. However, inclusion is based on a person's desire to be included, willingness to submit to its

teachings, and repentance from sin.

Does the Bible Teach Exclusion?

– The Bible also teaches that some people are to be excluded from full acceptance and participation into the believing community.

Exclusion in the Old Testament

The Old Testament describes certain instances when a person was to be excluded from worshiping with the rest of the community. Deuteronomy 23:1-8 describes three different kinds of people who were to be excluded from entering the assembly of the Lord: 1) Males who were emasculated by crushing or cutting, 2) a person born of a forbidden marriage and their descendants (down to the tenth generation) and 3) any Ammonite or Moabite and their descendants (down to the tenth generation). These people were to be excluded from entering the assembly of the Lord.

It should be noted that Ruth, the great-grandmother of David, and part of the lineage of Christ, was a Moabitess. She was among those who were to be excluded from entering the assembly of the Lord. But she made a complete commitment to the God of Israel and to the people of Israel when she said, “Your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16/ESV). Thus, Ruth became a proselyte, a convert to Judaism, and she bound herself to the obligations and privileges of the community.

The Old Testament also describes situations where members of the

community were disciplined and excluded from the community. Anyone who ate blood was to be “cut off” from the community (Leviticus 17:14). Anyone who sacrificed a child to Molech was to be put to death by the community. And if the community turned a blind eye to it, God Himself said that He would cut that person off from the community (Leviticus 20:5). And the community was supposed to exercise discipline in other areas including adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. (Leviticus 20).

Exclusion in the New Testament

The New Testament also teaches that there are times when a person is to be excluded from the faith community. In Matthew 18, Jesus teaches that an erring/sinning brother or sister who refuses to listen to the correction of the church is to be treated as a pagan or a tax collector (Matthew 18:17).

In Matthew 25, Jesus spoke of a great separation that would occur at the end of the age when He will separate the sheep from the goats (the righteous from the unrighteous). This separation will be determined by God. It will not be decided by any human court.

In the *Parable of the Weeds* (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), Jesus taught that a great separation would occur at the harvest (the end of the age), when the weeds (“the sons of the evil one”) would be separated from the wheat (“the sons of the kingdom”). The

separation was not supposed to be done before the harvest, for fear that the wheat would be uprooted along with the weeds. They were both supposed to grow together until the final harvest. Based on this parable, some are reluctant to make any kind of distinction in the church of what is good or evil. The argument is that the ultimate decision is to be left up to God. But it should be noted that this parable is not teaching that the wheat and the weeds are supposed to coexist in the church, letting God separate it in the end. But rather, the wheat and the weeds will live side by side *in this world* (believers and unbelievers), only to be separated by God in the end.

In the account of *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, Jesus teaches that there is another kind of separation after death (Luke 16:19-31). Some will be included in the place of eternal bliss and some will be excluded from it in a place of torment and agony. This inclusion or exclusion is determined by God after death.

The Epistles tend to shed a little more light on issues of exclusion in the church. In Romans, the apostle Paul said that believers should avoid other members of the church who cause divisions and offenses, “contrary to the doctrine which you learned” (Romans 16:17/NKJV). This is a call for Christians to evaluate the conduct and teaching of other Christians, and either grant or withhold fellowship

accordingly.

In 1 Corinthians 5, the apostle Paul taught that a brother or sister who was sinning flagrantly was to be “put out of the fellowship” (v.2/NIV) as an act of discipline. This chapter also teaches that Christians are not supposed to associate with sexually immoral people (1 Corinthians 5:9). This does not mean *unbelieving* sexually immoral people, but rather those who call themselves Christians, but who are “sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat” (v.11). Paul goes on to say, “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. ‘Expel the wicked man from among you’” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13/NIV). The church then is not to tolerate sin because it will affect the whole body, just like yeast works through dough (v.6).

Ephesians chapter 5 warns about being deceived by those who profess faith in Christ, but who continue to live in open, unrepentant sin, thinking that God will not judge them. Verse 6 calls them, “sons of disobedience.” And verse 7 warns, “Therefore do not be partners with them.” Christians should not be deceived into thinking that God won’t judge sin. Obedient Christians are to separate themselves from disobedient Christians.

John, the beloved disciple of Christ warned that, “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God” (2 John 9/ESV). It goes on to say that, “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting. For whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works” (2 John 10-11/ESV). In this passage, those who spread false teaching were to be excluded from fellowship.

And the book of Revelation teaches that in the end, God will exclude from the holy city, the New Jerusalem – all impurity, and those who do what is shameful or deceitful (Revelation 21:27). Sin will not be allowed into the holy city of God, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Conclusions on Inclusion – Here then are several biblical conclusions on the subject of inclusion into the life and fellowship of the church, and the kingdom of God.

1) In both the Old and New Testaments, God has always been welcoming of those who want to turn to Him in faith.

2) All who come to Him will not be turned away (John 6:37).

3) All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13).

4) Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

5) God does not want anyone

to perish but that all should reach repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

6) God is impartial in His judgment of sin.

7) The church is to be impartial in dealing with sin.

8) It is possible for a person to be excluded from the fellowship of the church because of sinful conduct or false teaching.

9) Sin will not be permitted to enter heaven (Revelation 21:27).


10) Inclusion into the life and fellowship of the church involves a profession of faith and repentance that leads to life (Acts 2:38-39; 11:17-18).

The early Brethren were sometimes criticized for accepting persons by baptism into the life of the church, only to excommunicate them in a short period of time. And the question was raised whether people should be examined more carefully before being baptized. However, Alexander Mack concluded that throughout both the Old and New Testaments, “God has to accept all on the basis of their outward profession. Only after a man has entered into a relationship with God and His church is that man tested in the commandments of God.” (Stoffer, Dale R. *Background and Developments of Brethren Doctrines: 1650-1987*. Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. 1989, p.81)

Therefore, the Bible teaches both inclusion and exclusion. Anyone can be included into the fellowship

of the church on the profession of their faith. And the church has the authority and responsibility to discipline (and perhaps exclude) persons who are not willing to abide in the commandments of God. The

Bible also teaches that in the life to come, not all will be included in the kingdom of heaven.

[From *BRF Witness*, Vol. 52, No. 3, 2017. Selected by the editor. Used by permission of Eric Brubaker.] 

marriages

May the homes established by these marriages be little substations of heaven, where God reigns and His blessings flow.

Gingerich-Stoltzfus

Bro. Kendall, son of Jim and Ada Gingerich, Burkesville, KY, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Omar and Nancy Stoltzfus, Advance, MO, at First United Methodist Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church, on June 2, 2017, by Floyd Lengacher.

Hochstetler-Reiff

Bro. Ryan, son of David and Alma Hochstetler, Aroda, VA, and Sis. Carrie, daughter of Lloyd and Lou Reiff, Shippensburg, PA, at Culpeper Untied Methodist Church for Gospel Light Mennonite Church on June 10, 2017, by Eldon Hochstetler.

Shenk-Yoder

Bro. Timothy, son of Harry and Edith Shenk, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Keturah, daughter of Aaron and Naomi Yoder, Leesburg, IN, at Sandy Ridge Mennonite Church for Clay Street Mennonite Church on June 17, 2017, by Wade Burkholder.

cradle roll

The children which the Lord hath graciously given . . . Genesis 33:5

Beachy, Doug and Charity (Schlabach), Auburn, KY, fourth child and son. Reed Elliot, June 26, 2017.

Coblentz, Jeremy and Carolyn (Lambright), Hadley, PA, third child and daughter, Jacquelyn Claire, March 10, 2017.

Derksen, John and Miriam (Hershberger), Greensburg, KY seventh child, fifth daughter, Jana Michelle, June 13, 2017.

Gingerich, Marcus and Andrea (Gingerich), Plain City, OH, second child and son, Jensen Marc, June 1, 2017.

Jantzi, Charles and Melanie (Ropp), Lucknow, ON, fifth child and daughter, Aubrey Mae, May 27, 2017.

King, Chester and Rhoda (Stoltzfus), Port Royal, PA, third child, second daughter, Janessa Carol, May 8, 2017.

Knepp, Norman and Debora (Schmidt), Jackson, OH, fourth child, second son, Kendall Drew, April 26, 2017.

Lebold, Joshua and Debbie (Ropp), Bluevale, ON, first child and daughter, Amy Lynn, Nov. 18, 2016.

Miller, Anthony and Sherri (Chupp), Stuarts Draft, VA, third child, second son, Connor Myles, Feb. 22, 2017.

Miller, James and Amy (Kropf), Dominican Republic, seventh child, fourth son, Jayden Dominic, March 13, 2017.

Miller, Jason and Carolyn (Graber), Auburn, KY, first son and daughter, Lance Fynn and Kenzie Lynn, June 23, 2017.

Miller, Karl and Darella (Rohrer), Eden Valley, MN, first child and son, Treyton Ardel, June 1, 2017.

Miller, Michael and Krista (Peachey), Minerva, OH, first child and daughter, Kezia Ruth, May 19, 2017.

Schrock, Clifford and Joanna (Kramer), Jackson, OH, second child, first daughter, Brittany, Jo, May 21, 2017.

Smucker, Kevin and Kristal (Barkman), Chesterhill, OH, third child and son, Alek Judson, June 11, 2017.

Sommers, Jonathan and Jennifer (Coblentz), Meadville, PA, seventh child, third son, Gabriel Jonas, May 7, 2017.

Swartzentruber, Brian and Dorothy (Petersheim), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, second daughter, Ashley Kate, May 28, 2017.

Swartzentruber, Kevin and Retha (Slabaugh), Abbeville, SC, second child and son, Trey Bryson, April 6, 2017.

Troyer, Titus and Kathryn (Mast), Fredonia, KY, fourth child, second son, Kyle Anthony, May 17, 2017.

Weaver, Rodney and Glenda (King), Denmark, SC, third child, first daughter, Chloe Brielle, May 30, 2017.

Yoder, Aaron and Karla (Miller), Jackson, OH, ninth child, fifth daughter, Harmony, June 25, 2017.

Yoder, Keith and Hannah (Beachy), Due West, SC, fourth child, second son, Benson Keith, Feb. 28, 2017.

Yoder, Ray and Alina (Miller), Minerva, OH, fifth child, and daughter, Makayla Beth, May 16, 2017.

Yutzy, Gideon and Esther (Yoder), Hutchinson, KS, (Ireland as of August 9), third child and daughter, Honor Naomi, April 8, 2017.




ordinations

May the grace of God be upon our brothers as they minister faithfully. Let us pray for them.

Bro. Larry Ropp, 53, (wife, Susan Jantzi), Lucknow, Ontario, was ordained to the office of bishop at Whitechurch Amish Mennonite Church, Lucknow, ON, on Oct. 2, 2016. Preordination messages were given by Lewis Bender, Jr., Paris, TN. The charge was given by

John Gerber, assisted by Lewis Bender, Jr., and Laverne Ropp.

Bro. Leighton Yoder, 52, (wife Joanna Miller) was ordained as minister at Sharon Bethel Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa, on April 23, 2017. Preordination messages were brought by Earl Peachey, Belleville, PA. The charge was given by Delmar Bontrager, assisted by Gabriel Beachy and Earl Peachey. Marlin Coblentz, Matthew Petersheim, and Michael Ropp were also in the lot. 

obituaries

Kauffman, Rosie Fern “Rose,” Fisher, 46, of Lott, TX, died Jan. 16, 2017, after a valiant fight with cancer. She was born at Gordonville, PA, on Nov. 8, 1970, to Sam and Sarah Fisher.

She was a faithful member of Faith Mennonite Fellowship, Lott, TX. She was known for her love for people and her involvement with them. The love and joy of her life were her husband and her children. Her zest for life was an encouragement and inspiration. Her five-year fight with cancer was faced with courage. In spite of negative effects of the treatments, she was seldom discouraged.

On June 30, 2006, she was married to Owen Kauffman. They were blessed with one daughter, Arianna, and two sons, Jacob and Wyatt. She is survived by her husband and their three children. Other survivors include her parents Sam

and Sarah Fisher, Greenville, TN; four sisters: Anna Mary Fisher, Abbeville, SC; Linda (Harlan) Garber, Deer Lodge, TN; Elizabeth (Phil) Kauffman, Iva, SC; and Joy Fisher, Abbeville, SC; seven brothers: Lee (Sadie) Fisher, Lott, TX; Raymond (Lana Sue) Fisher, Limestone, TN; Michael (Verna) Fisher, Rural Retreat, VA; Samuel (Christina) Fisher, Russellville, KY; Matthew (Violet) Fisher, Abbeville, SC; Marvin (Angela) Fisher, Abbeville, SC; and Eugene (Charity) Fisher, Donalds, SC; and numerous nieces and nephews and a great niece. She was preceded in death by her paternal and maternal grandparents, one niece and one nephew.

The funeral was held on Jan. 20, with Elmer Smucker, Brian Bontrager and Andy Mullet serving. Burial was in the Clover Hill Cemetery.

Nisly, Daniel O., 79, died at Hospice House in Hutchinson, KS, June 21, 2017. He was afflicted with pulmonary fibrosis. He was born Sept. 27, 1937, son of the late Edward and Lizzie (Yoder) Nisly, in rural Hutchinson.

He was a member and minister of Cedar Crest A.M. Church. In the 1970's and 80's, their family served for 12 years at Hillcrest Home, Harrison, Arkansas, where Daniel was pastor to the service unit.

On August 24, 1963, he was married to Iva Burkholder. She survives. Their four children are David (Yvonne) Nisly, Catlett, VA; Jonathan (April) Nisly, Haven; Joseph (Gwen) Nisly, Partridge; and Elizabeth (Jon) Miller, Hutchinson, and 15 grandchildren. Other survivors include siblings: Vera Mae Nisly; William (Elizabeth) Nisly; Harley (Emma) Nisly, all of Hutchinson; Lester (Edna) Nisly, Abbeville, SC; Elmer (Cora) Nisly, Larry (Barbara) Nisly, and John F. (Sara Mae) Nisly, all of Hutchinson, and Barbara Ellen (David E.) Miller, South Hutchinson.

Preceding him death was a sister, Laura (Mrs. Paul W. Nisly).

The funeral was held at Cedar Crest on June 23, with Daniel Bontrager and Lee Nisly serving. James Shetler conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery.

Yoder, Claude, 82, of Orville, AL, died of heart failure April 22, 2017. He was born Nov. 22, 1934, at Norfolk, VA, son of the late Enos and Mary (Miller) Yoder.

At his passing, he was a member

of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Hartselle, AL.

On Aug. 15, 1971, he was married to Arlene (Overholt) Troyer, who preceded him in death April 6, 2014. To this union was born one son and two daughters: Noah (Verna) Yoder, Rutherford, TN; Rachel Yoder, Safford, AL; and Rebecca (Micah) Weaver, Owenton, KY.

Claude was previously married on Mar. 10, 1955, to Martha Troyer, who preceded him death on July 24, 1970. To that union were born five sons and three daughters: David (Rhoda) Yoder, Hickory, KY; Wayne (Emma) Yoder, Cynthiana, KY; Glenda (who died as an infant); Edith (Herb) Miller, Safford, AL; Calvin (Naomi) Yoder, Moulton, AL; Samuel (Ruby) Yoder, Belleville, AR; Joseph (Sara) Yoder, Rutherford, TN; Nioma (Stephen) Wagler, Kenton, TN. Arlene was previously married to Robert Lee Troyer, who preceded her in death on Oct. 16, 1966, To that union were born three daughters and one son, (who survive), Lilly (Eli Ray) Weaver, Safford, AL; Faith (David) Yoder, Oskaloosa, KS; Mary Ann (Freeman) Weaver, Cullman, AL; and Robert (Nora) Troyer, Aroda, VA. Also surviving are two brothers, Edwin and Floyd, four sisters, Sadie, Vernie, Alta, and Mary, 115 grandchildren and 93 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death (besides his parents) are three brothers, Allen, Melvin, and Norman, and one daughter-in-law, Edith; one grandson, Matthias, and two great grandsons, Alex and

Joshua.

The funeral was held on April 25, with Linfred Kauffman, Leonard Weaver, and Marcus Yoder serving. Gerald Yoder conducted the committal.

Yoder, Elvin, 86, of Hartselle, AL, died of heart failure April 30, 2017. He was born July 11, 1930, son of the late Allen and Elizabeth (Tice) Yoder in Somerset County, PA.

He was a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Hartselle.

On Oct. 7, 1952, he was married to Clara Troyer, who died Jan. 11, 1979. To this union were born four sons and four daughters: Deloris (Broaddus) Massey, Glasgow, KY; Elvin Ray (Gladys Amstutz), Bastrop, TX; Jonathan Paul, Nelson Lee, Mary Catherine, Herman Dale (Sharon Weaver) Temple, GA; Judith Arlene, and Rosetta Joy (Owen) Yoder, Orrville, AL

On April 4, 1980, Elvin was married to Barbara Ann Weaver. She survives. To this union were born two sons and one daughter: Nathan Glen (Julie Troyer), Temple, TX; Glenda Marie (Emmanuel) Yoder, Sterling, AK, and Paul Allen (Juanita Coblentz), Falkville, AL.

Elvin is survived by five brothers: Vernon, Lloyd, Eli, Paul, and Mark; and two sisters, Evelyn and Ada; 17 grandchildren and 28 great grandchildren. Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by two sons, Jonathan Paul and Nelson Lee and three daughters: Mary Catherine, Judith Arlene and Rosella Joy; two grandchildren

Valerie and Joel, two brothers, Owen and Edwin, and two sisters, Alta and Anna Catherine.

The funeral was held on May 4, with Samuel Nisly, Wayne Nisly, Linfred Kauffman, and Leonard Weaver serving. Burial was in the Emmanuel Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yoder, Paul W., 68, of Montezuma, GA, died on June 19, 2017, after a courageous 2 ½ year battle with cancer. He was born at Virginia Beach, VA, on April 1, 1949, son of the late William N. and Emma (Weaver) Yoder.

He was a faithful member of Clearview Mennonite Fellowship.

On Jan. 2, 1972, he was married to Kathryn Yoder. They cherished the 45 years they had together. She survives. Children surviving are Joann Yoder, Montezuma; Janet Yoder, Montezuma; Carol (Delmer) Plank, Cross Hill, SC; Karen, Waynesboro, GA; Wayne Yoder, Waynesboro, GA; Keith Yoder, Montezuma; and eight grandchildren.

Preceding him in death besides his parents was one niece, Margaret Yoder.

The funeral was held on June 22, with Clyde Yoder, Dwight Yoder, and Donnie Brennehan serving. Interment followed in the Clearview Cemetery, with Noah Yoder officiating.


Zook, Stephen W., Jr., 89, of Belleville, PA, died at William Penn Nursing Home May 31, 2017. He was born at Belleville, PA, Dec. 14, 1927, son of Stephen W. and Mary (Peachey) Zook.

He was a member of Valley View A.M. Church.

On Nov. 24, 1949, he was married to Bertha M. Yoder. She survives. Their six children are: Alvin D. and wife Sharon Zook, Hartville, OH; Linda R. Zook, Virginia Beach, VA; Anna Mary Hostetler and husband Norman, Belleville; Joseph M. Zook and wife Erma, Belleville; Rose M. Kauffman and husband Raymond, Belleville; Esther Troyer and husband Vernon, of

Millersburg, OH; 25 grandchildren, and 18 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by an infant daughter, daughter-in-law, Anna Mary Zook, seven brothers and five sisters. Stephen was the last of his immediate family.

The funeral was held on June 11, with Matthew Peachey, Eli King, and Earl Peachey serving. Jesse Zook conducted the committal and burial at the Locust Grove Cemetery. 

observations

Church splits are such a discouraging situation for those in the midst of the drama. But the pall reaches further than the persons within those congregations. Those who observe from a “safe” distance sometimes find that these schisms serve to feed their disillusionment and cynicism. These difficult situations are often described by those sympathetic to the division as regrettable but unavoidable. Those who leave often justify the action as being necessary in order to preserve their integrity. Once in a while that might be right. Whether it actually is that way or not, we can understand that those who leave feel great incentive to present the justification

of the separation as equal to or greater than their response. This separation can make people feel obligated to ‘choose sides’ in ways that trample the nuances of intimate brotherhood relationships that were forged over years and decades and generations. The resulting pain presents remarkable parallels to those who grieve the passing of a loved one.

I’m guessing that many of us are aware of situations where church spawning is motivated by practical factors like church growth, etc. That proliferation is healthy. In rare occasions, a difference of vision and calling make it seem wise for two parties to mutually bless

each other in a parting of ways. However, we usually need each other's perspectives and strengths more than we think we do.

But the business of church splits I'm referring to is often transacted with the currency of pride and selfishness. Let's add one more: convenience. When uncharitable motives drive our divisions, is it because God couldn't hold this thing together, or wasn't He given the opportunity? Where pride, selfishness and convenience are in the driver's seat, is God at work? May the Lord help us to understand our motives. We owe it to ourselves, our children and our Lord to walk circumspectly.

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As a child and youth I was privileged to attend school staffed by teachers who took their job very seriously. In high school the two primary teachers were fathers and bread winners. (One of those men currently edits this periodical.) I'm not sure that they were paid enough for their efforts and don't know how much it was. But the school board didn't see the teachers as volunteers either. I believe we've grown in our awareness that teachers deserve fair wages. Small communities face special challenges in this regard. Fair compensation for teachers has

the dual effect of making it possible for good teachers to teach and avoiding the summer scramble of school boards trying to fill a teaching position with a list of teachers' qualifications that shrinks as the calendar advances.

• • • • •

U. S. drivers drove their trucks, cars, SUVs and vans an estimated 3.22 trillion miles in 2016! Each vehicle averages about 13,500 miles per year. Some are driven much more, and some much less. When I was a child back in the 1970's it was considered remarkable if a vehicle lasted to 100,000 miles. If that was considered a full life span of a vehicle, that would mean that a typical vehicle today would last only about 7.5 years. If we're tempted to grumble about things not being built to be as durable as they used to be, let's be encouraged that today's vehicles last much longer than they used to. We own a mini-van, a small car and a pickup truck. All of these are much older than 7.5 years old and none have fewer than 100,000 miles.

When my father passed away last fall at age 89 he still also sometimes drove a 1990 Oldsmobile that he had for many years as his spare vehicle. He gave it the nick-name of "the old gray mare." He often remarked

how well it still drove in spite of its cosmetic deficiencies, which included generous rust accents among the original gray paint. He didn't drive it as much in his last years as earlier, but he seemed to relish putting miles on that car. Dad thought it would probably run to 400,000 miles, but he didn't live to see that day. My sister Lois and Marvin acquired the car and still drive it. "The old gray mare" is still running, so it might make it to 400,000 miles yet.

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About 11 years ago, Pluto was downgraded from its status as a planet. This came about when the scientific community redefined the term "planet." As a result, those who memorize the planets in our solar system in today's schools have a list that looks a bit different than the list we used when I learned them. Let's remember that "settled science" is only as settled as it is accurate. Accuracy improves as man's understanding of creation grows. We don't have to understand the full intricacies of creation in order to accept by faith that "In the beginning God created...." His creation is marvelous indeed! Mankind will likely be discovering remarkable details about our world as long as the earth remains.

• • • • •

The National Park Service was formed in 1916. There are 59 national parks. National parks are designated as such in order to preserve scenery, wildlife and historical objects which can be either natural or man made. One of the primary objectives is that these things be preserved for the enjoyment and appreciation of future generations. I have pleasant memories of the very few visits I've made to national parks. It is good and right when the awe and wonder of creation draw our attention to the Creator. But we don't need to go to a national park to be awed by God's creation. In almost any natural setting, the purposeful, keen observer can find many remarkable details that are easily overlooked.

• • • • •

American households who had dogs as pets spent \$672 dollars per year on veterinary/medical care for these dogs back in 2006. This is nearly doubled from what was spent back in 1998. I wonder what the figure is today. By 2010 pets outnumbered children in America by a ratio of 4 to 1. We like pets and enjoy their antics and companionship. However, these figures are an invitation for us to re-examine how we choose to steward our relational and economic resources. God is honored when

these are invested with an eye toward eternity.

• • • • •

Frank Reed made some comments regarding how we raise our sons that resonated with me profoundly. When little boys are born they get all their life and orientation from their parents. They rightly identify mother as a source of good things. This is natural. However, God designed that men lead and provide for those whom God has entrusted to their care. A boy who doesn't transition from getting things he likes from the women in his life to serving, honoring and protecting his mother and sisters is severely impaired in his ability to function as God designed men to function. I'll mention two problems associated with this phenomena: First, boys will continue to be relational consumers rather than providers. Secondly, this facilitates a view of woman as objects of gratification, opening the door to pornography, and a variety of illicit sexual expressions.

One of the most effective defenses against these temptations lies with training the sons God has entrusted to our care. When they understand that God designed us to provide for and lead the women in their families rather than take whatever we can from them, we build an awareness

of correct human relationships that will serve them, our families and churches very well. The training to be responsible young men begins well before they become men. May God give us grace and wisdom.

• • • • •

The refugee crisis in Europe continues to unfold, even as ISIS' self-declared caliphate disintegrates. Many if not most of these displaced persons identify as Muslim. Their displacement is the result of unrest in their home areas. Whenever these people make a connection between their faith and the harvest of death and destruction they're experiencing, they are more receptive to the gospel. Anabaptist believers who practice sacrificial love, who serve those who have no way of reciprocating, who dress modestly, who don't resist evil with force, who display the living Christ in word and deed, present an alternative to Muslim orthodoxy, that is quite compelling. The combination of faith, deeds, and appearance stands in stark contrast to these people's impressions of Christian America. It's quite possible that these refugees represent the greatest openness to the gospel that this generation has seen among Muslim people. May God continue to call all men to himself.

-RJM 

When Time Shall Be No More

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

There shall be time no longer (Revelation 10:6b KJV).

My parents were eating supper in the kitchen. My father asked for the apple sauce, then suddenly collapsed and died. For him time was no longer.

Many people have the erroneous idea that when Jesus comes again, He will come as a loving Savior. There will surely be time to get right with God. At his second coming, however, the Bible says He will come to “judge the living and the dead” (2 Tim. 4:1). Time, as we know it, will be no more.

Modern Western culture has lost respect for God and his creation. We sacrifice children on the altar of abortion and practice perverseness of the basest kind, of which the Bible says, “God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral” (Heb. 13:4). The book of Revelation gives ample warnings of God’s judgment on such bold ungodliness.

Jesus is preparing a sinless, new heaven for his saints. When He comes to take his children home, there will be no more time for repentance. This is bad news for those who are not

ready and will then answer to Jesus Christ, the Judge.

It is, however, good news for the redeemed. They will be rewarded with the awesome presence of Jesus. Make sure you are ready for time to be no more. Do all that you can to help others turn from sin and sure judgment to salvation and sure rewards through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Now is the accepted time...now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2 KJV). One day there shall be time no longer!

{From page 136 of Revelation Day by Day, edited by R. Leslie Holmes and Richard A. Bodey. Published in 2001 by Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Used by permission.}



Respecting the Property of Others

Kevin Zook

“God...giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17). How do we relate to the things that God has given for others to enjoy?

The Scriptures contain principles to guide us in this important consideration. **“Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor’s house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee”** (Proverbs 25:17). **“And if a man borrow ought of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good”** (Exodus 22:14). **“The wicked borroweth and payeth not again; but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth”** (Psalm 37:21). **“The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender”** (Proverbs 22:7). The man who was disturbed when the borrowed “axe head fell into the water” (2 Kings 6) had a right outlook.

What are some examples of possessions of others that we should respect? Houses and surrounding property are the domain of the family. To call before stopping at someone’s house shows respect. Even with relatives, knocking before

entering is respectful. Peeking in the windows when we are not expected is an invasion of privacy. We should not disturb closed gates when distributing Gospel literature. “No Trespassing” and “No Hunting” signs must be respected. Pranks played on another’s property are not respectful; such acts could fall into the category of property defacement. Tools should not be borrowed without permission. Even when borrowing from relatives, we should respect personal ownership.

Personal space must be respected. Standing closely, speaking loudly, and touching frequently should be avoided. A clean scent and fresh breath show respect for others’ personal space. Nicknames can be a form of disrespect. They often poke fun at peculiarities the recipient cannot help. Very close friendships can become a drain if we fail to respect each others’ time. Respect limits in the frequency of extended phone calls and visits. Our friend likely has many other important responsibilities.

Diaries, journals, and special friendship letters are private property

that we must respect. Siblings and visiting friends should not read them without permission. Similar respect applies to dresser drawers, closet doors, and kitchen cupboards while visiting in others' homes. Children should be taught that Father's and Mother's dresser drawers are private.

We should also respect others' vehicles. Borrowed vehicles should be filled with gas before being returned. Taking time to fuel them can mean more than offering money. Mileage reimbursement must be offered. Even if we had to clean up crumbs and used tissues when we borrowed the vehicle, returning it washed and swept is respectful. When we park our vehicle in tight spaces, our opening doors must not scrape the side of the neighboring vehicle.

Our employer's assets are worthy of high respect. Habitual use of tools and vehicles, especially high-value assets, shows a lack of respect for our employer's property. Phones on many an employee's belt threaten the respect of the employer's time. Phones can rob our employer of time and efficiency. Efficiency experts estimate that after every task interruption, 20 minutes are needed to reach pre-interruption efficiency.

Employees with ambitions of being self-employed must refrain, out of respect and good taste, from

promoting a side business on their employer's time or property, unless with prior agreement. Such aspiring employees will respect the time, effort, and experience their employer needed to build a successful operation. Using an employer's tools to complete jobs for personal compensation during off hours should be avoided. With a prior understanding and timely reimbursement, this may be acceptable within reasonable limits. Using our employer's assets without his knowledge and then later offering reimbursement is different from having a prior understanding.

Public property, such as road signs, roadways, and public parks, should be respected. When transporting large or heavy loads, care must be taken to cause no damage to the road, parked cars, and mailboxes. Graffiti is always disrespectful of another's property and indicates a coarse sense of humor.

How can we teach our children this respect? This principle is a way of life, and children must observe it in action. Young children should be taught to respect the possessions of their family in general and the gifts they are given in particular. For example, John should not be allowed to throw his toy truck across the room for the pleasure of seeing it bounce or break. That may damage

both the walls and the truck. The level of respect for one's own possessions has correlation to the respect one has for others' possessions.

Our standard practice as parents should be to call the children to help put away the toys at the host's house. Hosts need not protest that this is unnecessary. To put away the clutter of toys before we leave is an important show of respect. Children must ask to borrow toys or books from Grandma's house, even though they know she will say yes. Children should hear Mother call Sister Anne to ask her if they may stop in later that morning. Father should offer to pay for the use of borrowed tools.

When Samuel is working with Father, and the chain is damaged on a rock, they go and purchase a new chain before returning the saw to Uncle Paul. When the handle on the borrowed shovel breaks, Father does not wrap it with tape and return it

to Grandpa. He purchases a handle of equal value or better quality to return. Children should understand that asking for a drink of water at the house where they are visiting is acceptable, but that asking for snacks or treats is not respectful. Children at school must know that snooping in other students' desks is disrespectful. Teenagers should not generally try to fix or modify Father's possessions without his permission.

Finally, the most important guiding principle to teach our children in respecting others' possessions is found in Scripture, "**And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise**" (Luke 6:31). May we be found faithful in living this out.

[This article was originally published in the July, 2016, issue of Home Horizons. Submitted for publication by Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA. Used by permission.]



***A tongue of praise has
no time for gossip.***

Experiences of the Mission Field

Floyd Stoltzfus, Belize City, Belize

What might missionaries face, patiently endure, and joyfully live with? The following happenings, trials, tests, and experiences are from various situations of Christian missions. Most of these stories are historical in nature. Other happenings took place more recently. Pray for God's protection over missionaries and the national churches.

David Brainerd said, "I cared not how I lived, nor what hardships I went through, if only I might win souls to Christ." David walked the trails of Pennsylvania even during cold winters in snow and rain to take the gospel to the American Indians. Some were transformed into the glorious image of Jesus Christ. He suffered much from over-exposure and died in his late twenties.

It is night time and dark! The deep river called Top Gallon is flooded in Belize. The ferry is not in service. The water covers the approaching planks that are used to get into the ferry. A

"cranky" dory (dug-out canoe) is used to transport two families with four young children across the river. Several trips are made. You load the dory with feed, chicks, gas, kerosene, suitcases, groceries, needed parts for a broken down vehicle, and more. You sit still on the dory as the veteran navigator paddles his way confidently and quietly across the river in spite of the strong current and you know there are only several inches from the top of the dory to the water. You reach the other side safely. But then it is two miles to the mission house. Walking is the only option. Some children need to be carried.

The fuel hose burst on the vehicle. That will be repaired later in the night. Finally the exhausted families reach the mission house. The beds feel so good to the children. The two fathers walked back one mile to repair the mission vehicle. They work on it until it pumps fuel without leaking and runs smoothly. One family drives to their mission home

through some swampy area and gets stuck. Now it is past midnight. Soon they need to give an answer to the mission board whether they are willing to stay on the field for another two years. Their answer, "Yes, we are willing." It is worth all the hardships, distresses, and sacrifice when years later they see a growing, stable church rejoicing in the Lord.

Driving through the jungle rain forest may require crossing slippery, narrow wooden bridges without railings in several feet of water. You remove the fan belt and place a piece of cardboard in front of the radiator. Carefully and prayerfully you drive onto the bridge while another man walks ahead of the vehicle to direct the passage. In some lands missionaries will drive through deep ruts with sticky mud for miles to their destination with food and other items for the poor and more than that to preach the Gospel. These muddy, slippery difficulties seem to vanish when people who were steeped in superstitions and fears have been brought out of bondage into the glorious liberty of our Lord Jesus.

It was getting late in the northland. It seemed so long to the missionary's wife for her husband (a pilot) in coming home on his airplane from another reservation. She was concerned and wondered what

could have happened. Finally, in the distance, she saw him approaching the lake to land. She observed an awesome sight as two angels were traveling with the plane, one at each wing.

Mission life may find you involved in repairing your own vehicle, putting up with a screeching wash machine (at least for a little while), or bearing with the frustrations of computer failure. Then fixing the toilet leaks, or replacing house siding because of deterioration through high humidity and rainfall or termites tests a person's character, especially if various other duties stare you in the face. But God has a marvelous way of quieting the spirit of the frustrated missionary. The enjoyment of God's creation in the tropics with the exotic, lacy, palm trees, colorful flowers, beautiful birds, lovely night sounds, the balmy breeze, the white cumulus clouds, and the warmth and welcome of national people has a way of causing our cares to evaporate.

Being a testimony for Jesus may require going the second mile, turning the other cheek, and patiently enduring cruel reproaches of injustice like being threatened and miserably tied up to pay a ransom. Others were kidnapped and some were raped because of following the Lamb into the highways and

hedges singing the songs of Zion and preaching the Gospel. A longtime missionary couple is ordered into their bedroom by robbers. They are held at gunpoint, while one collects the valuables that can be turned into easy cash.

There may be the opportunity to volunteer in carrying heavy backpacks of God's Word across Communistic borders. Fervent prayers are offered to the Heavenly Father for protection. There may be some of the group detained by the authorities who demand answers to the questions they ask. Through some miraculous intervention God leads the Christian volunteers on the way rejoicing but mixed with a certain fear that this is His work. God's ways are so much higher than our ways.

There is such a joy in seeing people believing the gospel, receiving the Lord, and walking in obedience. But oh, how sad when people are offended and fall back in the old paths of sin. Then the national

church fervently prays. Many pray daily for the backslidden brother. His name is mentioned at every mid-week prayer service. Finally after some years, the brother humbly repents in deep contrition. He was a preacher. He is not returning to ring any bells. The brother quietly submits to the ministers and the church. This brother dies later. We are confident that our gracious and forgiving Heavenly Father took him to Heaven.

“Discipleship cannot be purchased at bargain prices” (Nelson's Bible). The Apostle Paul humbly writes, “Are they the ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; . . . Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, ... Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (II Cor. 11:23-28).



*Some tears are
liquid prayers.*

The Joys of Homemaking (Part 1)

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

I found a small book in our library entitled, “The Joy of Housekeeping” written by Ella May Miller. If you recognize the author’s name, you are probably my age or older. Ella May Miller had a unique ministry to women. Each month, she sent out pamphlets in the mail discussing various subjects intended for woman. She encouraged women to gather monthly and share together on these issues. This ministry was called “Heart to Heart”. As a young mother, I was blessed by this time of sharing with other mothers. Later when we went to Belize, I used many of these pamphlets to teach the mothers in my sewing class. This month I want to use some gems out of her book to hopefully inspire you to find joy in the endless, mundane chores of housekeeping or homemaking as I would choose to call it.

It takes a house to make a home. It also takes maintenance to keep a house and that includes

hard physical work. The more we own, the more work is required. Housekeeping is pretty much what you make of it. It can be drudgery or it can be a joy. What will make the difference? The answer is simple yet difficult. It basically depends on our attitude even though there are other things which will play into the equation. Some things you may need to consider are, “do you understand what you are doing, are you struggling with health issues, do you need help, are you trying to do too much, or have you learned to delegate work to the children”? Do what you can to make your work easier then commit the rest to the Lord. Ask Him to increase your joy in your daily tasks.

Many women become discouraged with the daily routine of housework. We don’t automatically enjoy work, however work can be a challenge and a blessing. It is a blessing as we realize the many opportunities we have in this land of plenty. We have many

time-saving devices to make our work easier. We also have sufficient food to prepare good meals for our families and we have comfortable homes to enjoy with our families. Work can be a challenge as we learn to enjoy doing it well and doing it unto the Lord.


We individually hold the keys in our hands which will bring joy to housekeeping. The two keys are acceptance and thankfulness. Accept your housework as a profession. Develop a thankful spirit. Be grateful for all the good things God has given you. Express your thanksgiving to the Lord and to those around you. Thankfulness brings contentment. Learn to enjoy your work. Face your work with maturity. Be responsible. Be organized. Work with a goal and a schedule. You could never hold a job outside the home without these conditions, so learn to practice them in your home. A good attitude is the secret to happiness in doing your housework. A grumbling and complaining attitude is heaviness to the bones according to the Proverb writer. I believe it causes fatigue, frustration and exhaustion. It takes much more energy to do our work grudgingly. You can get much more done if you like what you are doing. So learn to like your work and determine to do it cheerfully. You

will be amazed at the difference in the atmosphere in your home when you enjoy what you are doing. A positive attitude will enable you to enjoy work simply for the sake of a job well done.

We are not all alike. We have different talents, different abilities, likes and dislikes. Excel in the work you enjoy. However, discipline yourself to learn to do well even those jobs you don't take pleasure in, but which need to be done. A quote from Elizabeth Elliot which has helped me is, "Just do the next thing". How important, when our day looks overwhelming, just do the next thing. Sometimes the work is larger in our minds then it actually is as we stay at it and do the next thing.

Every homemaker goes through a process of learning her own personal homemaking tasks. Each person and situation is unique. You can learn from others, however you will need to find your own basic requirements and needs that will apply to your home, husband and family. Single women will also be homemakers and will often need to balance housework with a job or career.

• • • • •

Next month I want to look at more practical ideas about homemaking. Until then, I hope you are or will become a joyful homemaker. 

NOAH

Markus Beachy, Dundee, OH

*Back in the day
When there was no rain
And up from the ground
Each day the dew came-*

*These were the days
When there lived giants.
Haunted and fierce,
Proud and defiant.*

*These were the ones
Who took to them wives.
The children that followed
Were incredible guys.*

*These guys were the ones
Who became famous
Heroes and warriors
Made quite a ruckus.*

*God then looked down
On this earth He had made.
God sighed to himself—
Yes, He was dismayed.*

*For the humans abounded
In all types of sin.
God was not happy
Oh He had no grin.*

*God was quite angry
With the evil on earth
And so he decided
Enough of this mirth!*

*God made a plan:
Enough of this mess!
I will destroy them-
That's for the best.*

*I'll take out the animals.
Birds also will die.
After God said this,
He gave a big sigh*

*But in this dark age
Lived Noah, the just.
He was perfect and good
In God he did trust.*

*Noah had three sons
Each a good fellow
Shem, Ham, and Japheth,
All strong, true, and mellow.*

*God informed Noah:
A dark age has come.
I'll kill all things breathing.
Every last one.*

*God also mentioned:
You must build a boat.
It's gonna' be big.
It also must float.*

*The wood shall be gopher,
Length four hundred feet.
Plus feet fifty yet—
Truly a feat.*

*And as for the width,
Of feet seventy-five
It'll help the big boat
To not take a dive.*

*The height is the last.
It also must be
Just forty-five feet
That's thirty cubits: see?*

*This ark then must be
Three stories high.
It must have a window
And a door in the side.*

*God also did tell him:
To earth I shall send
A big flood of water
That will make life end.*

*For under my heaven,
All creatures shall die.
Men's lives will just stop.
They won't say goodbye.*

*But now I have made
A promise with you.
You will not die,
And your family too.*

*You'll enter the boat
With each son of yours.
Plus your wife and the in-laws
Makes two sets of fours.*

*And now I'm requesting
Please put on this ship
A pair of each creature
(And no, it won't tip)*

*Two of each creature
Be gathered together
This is to ensure
None die off forever.*

*Do take much food
The kind you can eat.
For yourself plus the family
It'll be a large feat.*

Also much food
On this trip you shall take
For animals eat lots—
Do this for their sake!

Noah did listen,
And then he obeyed.
He followed all orders
That his God had made.

The day finally came
The ark was complete.
God then did tell Noah:
Start moving your feet.

You also must take
Of each kind you can eat
Fourteen animals
Making for many feet.

The unclean creatures
Whom you don't consume.
Take only one pair--
Makes two to groom.

There's also the birds.
Don't overlook those.
Seven pairs of each kind
They'll make many rows.

Life must keep living
Once the flood stops.
Then I'll be pleased;
It'll be tops.

God also mentioned
That after one week
Rain would come down
In a super fast streak.

He said rain would come
For days two score
Plus forty nights
Besides that, no more.

This man and his own
All entered the boat.
They went with the animals,
And soon they did float.

Geysers shot up.
The heavens gave rain.
The people outside
Tried, but in vain

To enter the ark
They shouted and then.
The waters kept rising
Still onward they ran

That death by drowning
Should be their fate
They cried out to Noah.
But alas, too late.

Land creatures died.
No people remained.
The birds were gone too.
God's heart was pained.

But yet there was hope
For Noah did float
With his family and zoo
Inside that big boat.

Noah and sons
Had quite the task
To give out the food
Fill each water cask.

Smells were intense.
Noise level so high.
Space felt a bit cramped.
Noah's question was "Why?"

"Why am I here,
Stuck in this boat?
With tons of work,
While we float and we float."

But then he remembered
The promise God made.
For God had promised
Noah would be saved.

The waters rose high
They topped mountain peaks
This flood did rise up
Oh, so many feet.

All creatures died.
And people too
Except for the ones
'board the floating zoo.

The waters did cover
The world for days
Five months exact
The people felt grave.

On Mount Ararat
The boat came to rest
But Noah could not
Get out of his nest.

2.5 months went by
Other mountains were sighted
Creatures grew restless
People got excited.

Noah opened a window
He sent out a bird
A raven by name
To see what'd occurred.

The raven flew much.
It went here and there
Until the flood waters
Were just nowhere.

Noah also did send
A bird called the dove.
Tried finding dry ground
But none was thereof.

So he brought the dove
Back into the ark.
Waited one week
Before she could embark.

This time the dove
Returned with a leaf
A green olive plant
Held in its beak.

The waters were down
Noah then knew.
He figured quite soon
They could exit the zoo.

*Again he waited
Exactly one week
He then let go
The dove from his keep.*

*She flew far away
And did not come back.
She'd found dry land
Where she built her shack.*

*Noah now had
Years six hundred one
10.5 months passed
Since the flood had begun.*

*So Noah lifted up
The covering of the boat.
He saw the ground
Had almost dried out.*

*Two more months passed
The ground was now dry!
It had been so long
Noah felt he could cry.*

*God informed Noah:
It's time to exit.
Get out of the boat
With the whole outfit.*

*All the animals must go
So they can spread out
To be fruitful and multiply
And wander about.*

*Noah and all
His relations departed.
Each animal pair
Also exited*

*After this Noah built
An altar to his Lord.
He sacrificed animals
Ones that had been aboard.*


*God then did promise
That never again
Would he kill all
Creatures and men.*

*Although man devises
Many evil deeds
I will not again
Destroy him with his seed.*

*I do place my rainbow
Up high in the heaven
To remind me of this
My promise to men.*

*I give you a promise
Which will last forever.
As long as earth's here
Destroy I will never.*

*Do not forget
The promise I've made
Just look at the rainbow
And know that I save.*

[Genesis 6-8] 



Book Review and Giveaway:
**Twelve Ways Your Phone
 Is Changing You**

-Gideon Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS

Tony Reinke's new book *Twelve Ways Your Phone Is Changing You* contains, among others, these sobering statistics:

- On average, people check their smartphones every 4.3 minutes of their waking lives.

- You are twenty-three times more likely to crash if you text while driving.

- In a survey conducted among professing Christian men under age thirty, almost half of them freely admitted to viewing online pornography on a regular basis.

- The number of volumes from an average day's worth of emailing and messaging would exceed those in the Library of Congress by one million (36 million versus 35 million).

Reinke's impetus for writing the book, however, was not to go off on an anti-technology tirade but to explore the question of "What is the best use of my smartphone in the flourishing of my life?" The book

is for people "who benefit from the smartphone and use it daily." Reinke himself appears to be more tech-savvy than average—in the preface he reveals that he has over thirty-two years of combined experience among four of the main social media sites.

That said, he is frank about the dangers surrounding the use of a smartphone. He boiled these dangers down to a list of twelve and wrote a chapter on each of them:

- We are addicted to distraction.
- We ignore our flesh and blood.
- We crave immediate appeal.
- We lose our literacy.
- We feed on the produced.
- We become like what we like.
- We get lonely.
- We get comfortable in secret vices.
- We lose meaning.
- We fear missing out.
- We become harsh to one another.
- We lose our place in time.

If we study the list, we have to

admit that at least several apply to our own phone habits. As Reinke makes clear, they do not all apply to all people, yet it is uncanny how universally applicable this book is. Several of the book's recurring themes as I have identified them are: 1) we should pursue only the meaningful; 2) human relationships should trump other pursuits; and 3) smartphones are changing us significantly, both personally and as a society.

Allow me to highlight a few of the book's noteworthy points.

The church needs a few digital monks—that is, people who stay off the internet in order to show what effect the internet has on the rest. The idea, as it was first presented to Reinke by a historian friend of his, is that “those off the grid function something like an astronaut living in outer space, who can return and report on what life is like in a different environment.”

Granted, there are other variables that would play in to such an experiment. The differences we would observe between the test group and those using the internet would not be absolutely conclusive. Still we would stand to learn something and, for those of us whose station in life allows it, becoming a digital monk would be a most noble pursuit.

Perhaps a good starting point would be to join this monastery (or convent, as the case may be) on a one-year or one-month basis.

The problem doesn't lie with the smartphone¹. The smartphone is a “modern marvel” made with people's God-endowed skills. The book discusses a passage from G.K. Chesterton that called people of his time to appreciate the wonders of technology (examples then included an early version of the telephone) because they “can be traced back to the glory of God.”

John Piper is quoted in the book as having said the following about his extensive collection of electronic devices: “I could almost come to tears over how precious they are to me... [They are] a treasure chest of the glories of God.” In the foreword of the book, which Piper wrote, he calls the smartphone, “for all the abuses,” a gift from God like papyrus or the printing press.

The way humans relate is changing in fundamental ways. It used to be that people's social interaction, main source of advice, not to mention their very identity, was rooted in the local physical community. Now, says Reinke, “we

¹ I personally come out at a bit of a different place on this one. Contact me for further discussion.

get lost in the virtual world and become oblivious to the flesh-and-blood world around us.” The book also devotes a chapter to the slander epidemic that has developed with the internet. If we’re not careful, it’s very easy to become addicted to spreading sensational news about others and making harsh, unfair judgments about them.

What then, is an appropriate response to a book like this? We should determine, like Saint Paul, to live out the Gospel no matter what challenges face our specific time period. “Each competitor must exercise self-control in everything. They [athletes] do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run uncertainly or box like one who hits only air. Instead I subdue my body and make it my slave” (1 Corinthians 9, NET).

Finally, here is the information on the book giveaway. Because this book

is so relevant and interesting, three copies will be given away. Anyone is welcome to participate. Simply email your name and mailing address to gideonutzy@gmail.com. The winners will receive a free copy of the book delivered to their mailboxes free of charge.

Just to reiterate: If your email comes to us at one of the predetermined places in the queue, you get a free book. So please, dash off an email on your smartphone. (That is, if you’re not a digital monk—if so, you might not really need the book anyway.) It only takes a minute and you just might win a copy of *Twelve Ways Your Phone Is Changing You*, one of the most thought-provoking books published in 2017.

Writers for Thinking Generation wish to generate, above all else, greater involvement in God’s Kingdom—especially among today’s Anabaptist young people. Send your feedback or original contribution to gideonutzy@gmail.com.



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• • • • •

We cannot avoid growing old, but we can avoid growing cold.

• • • • •

When embracing opportunity, give it a big hug.

• • • • •

Some parents are so eager to give their children what they didn't have that they fail to give them some of the good things they had been given.

• • • • •

Nostalgia is somewhat like a grammar lesson: you find the present tense and the past perfect.

• • • • •

He who would have the right to boast doesn't need to.

• • • • •

A man may exceed his reputation but he cannot exceed his principles.

• • • • •

Money will not buy repentance.

• • • • •

Every generation needs regeneration.

• • • • •

Avoid Satan as a lion, dread him as a serpent,
and fear him as an angel of light.